Wordeater 11

Staff for Wordeater XI

Jacquie Bebar (honorary), Etha Griffin, Karola Limbach, Doug Richard, John Stobart (faculty), Loudmouth McKracken (Ubiquitous)

Deadline for Wordeater XII, April 18 (C1069, J. Stobart) and the Spring Wordeater Awards:

THE $10 COVER DESIGN FOR WORDEATER XI GOES TO.....JEFF LANE

POETRY

$5.00..... Imagery
$5.00..... Sound Effects
$5.00..... Story
$5.00..... Structure
$5.00..... Diction
$5.00..... Cleverness

$10 BEST LONG POEM
$ 5 BEST LONG POEM
$ 5 BEST SHORT
$ 2.50 2nd
$ 1.50 3rd
$ 1.00 4th

FICTION

$ 5 FIRST
$ 5 MOOD
$ 5 SUSPICUS
$ 5 COMIC
$ 5 MALE CHARACTERIZATION
$ 5 FEMALE CHARACTERIZATION
$10 BEST OVER-ALL
2nd Best
3rd Best

$ 5 EDITORIAL
$ 5 ARTICLE
$ 5 REVIEW
$ 5 SATIRE
$ 5 RESEARCH

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Good Morning Americans

Good morning Americans
Isn't it
rather demonishly damp thirty three degreesy sleetsy
I'd say
but who cares
anyway
you may ask
but then again
who cares
anyhow
Why our capital city is so corrupt
It is near Georgetown
you know
Isn't it
then page two
Swoops down from the icy blue cloudless sky
rumours spreading their satanic wings
a thirtten month old baby bald eagle
spreading over the land
like peach jam over burnt toast
just a cover up
you may say
I never really cared for dry toast
or peach jam
anyway
Speaking of peaches
the shouting began all over the black crisp dry land
impeach
Impeach
IMPEACH
IMPEAR
Implum
imapple
What's it all about
Impeach our president
Why not
the bumper snicker read
Impeach my wife
she's always bugging me
page three
Demonstrates solutions to our problems are easily found
you know
rationalizing our minds
our leaders
our gas
There is a way
to strip our country
of
the excess extra extra fiendish fat
possessed by
anyone of us
EXERCISE
the devil you say
With a linda blairian smirk on your faces

good day

--Bill Pavlich

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY,....
OR HAVE YOU?

As I sit pondering the birth of my twenty-four year of existence, I wonder if I've really matured. Have I gained knowledge and wisdom, or am I just stumbling in the dark seeking answers to life's enigmas?

I've experienced the excruciating pain of childbirth under the duress of being sent away from home by parents who were too ashamed to have me near them and under the strain of having no husband to console me in my labor or to share my joy at the birth of our daughter.

On the other hand, I've felt the ecstacy of childbirth for the husband I loved. Having him there holding my hand, patiently comforting me in my labor, and beaming with pride and love at my bravery in bearing him a son was one of the most glorious moments I've ever experienced.

I've spent ten months in wedded bliss. Being a bride, housewife, and mother all at the same time was totally fulfilling. It was heavenly being completely dependent upon my husband for everything.

However, I've also learned to be independent. I was proud to be a father, mother, and head-of-the-household while my husband was in Viet Nam. It was a lonely and yet a strenghtening experience for me. His absence gave me a chance to work on all my major fallings at housework. I was changing.

My life became a turmoil when my husband returned from war only to reject the children and me. All the changes I'd made were to no avail. He wanted complete freedom. He'd found another love in Viet Nam..... heroin. How could I compete with a mistress who encompassed his very soul? His affair was his very life.

After fighting and resisting my husband's way of life, I succumbed to the pleasures and pain of drug experimentation. Willing to try anything once, I smoked, snorted, or dropped the various drugs my husband bought or the stuff I was turned on to. Alice never had it so good. I was happy and lighthearted with reefer, serene and peaceful on downers, contemplative with acid, freaked out on PCP, and having an endless affair with speed. I cranked myself up, up, up until I crashed into complete withdrawal and paranoia.

Now it's unthinkable to do anything but get stoned naturally with my mind. With relaxation and deep breathing, I can plunge myself into a glorious fantasyland without any chemical help. Meditation has made life happy and fulfilling.

When life wasn't so complete, however, I tried psychotherapy. Self-exploration was extremely painful; it showed me how crazy I could be. But self-exploration turned into self-discovery. Such knowledge of one's inner self is like riding the crest of a wave reaching toward the sky.

Life has been a carousel so far. I've been up and down, won and lost, loved and hated, and laughed and cried. I've lived with passionate intensity, and I've shut myself off from all feelings. I've been a Queen with nothing and a Cinderella with everything. I've been beaten by some experiences and grown with others.

So where am I now? I'm right in the middle of this kaliedoscope called life. As Neil Young so aptly puts it in one of his songs,".....twenty-four, and there's so much more."

--Anon.

Monkey See, Monkey Don't

Well, I thought, it's 3:30, and I can't hang around all night. I was on my second bottle of pop, and I didn't think I could drink three.

I was reluctant to leave because the day before I had done a very dumb thing. A bunch of us freshmen were playing the sophomores in volleyball and beating them badly. Roger Wolfe, a very tough, but dumb sophomore, started calling us stupid freshmens. He always said, "freshmens" instead of "freshmen" for some reason which I've never been able to figure out, and he never said it without a number of vulgarities, which I'll delete from my account.

I had made it through almost my whole freshman year of high school avoiding getting into trouble with him, but for some stupid reason, that day I smarted off. Actually what I said was pretty clever, but instead of complimenting me on my cleverness or laughing goodnaturdly, he said, "I'm going to beat the _____ out of you."

Without thinking, I came back with a snappy reply. "No you won't," I said. Not clever or anything, but it had a definite effect due to timing. His body kind of stiffened up, and his face turned a purplish shade. A vein in his neck stood out, threatening to pop. He didn't say much during the rest of the game. He just glared at me, intent on murder. I lost interest in volleyball mighty quick.

After the game ended, we went our separate ways, and I didn't see him again that day. I had almost forgotten the incident, but I was quickly reminded the next day on my way to P.E. class. Wolfe was hanging around the hallway waiting for his Ag. class to begin. When I went by he said, "I'm going to kill you after school, Richards." That wasn't all he said, but like I said, I'm going to remove his rougher oaths from this account.

Now, I never for a minute doubted that he couldn't or wouldn't do exactly that, if he wanted to, so believe me when I say I was scared. I was nearly six feet tall but only weighted about 135 pounds. He was only about five feet nine but weighted 187, at least, all muscle.

I didn't see him again until after I had eaten lunch but he had been telling everyone else what he was going to do to me, and every-so-often someone would report to me the atrocities he was going to perform on my body.

I didn't eat much, so I got back to school about fifteen minutes before my first afternoon class. I was sitting with some friends on the bleachers in the gym when Wolfe came in. I hoped he wouldn't see me, and after a couple minutes, I thought he hadn't. Then without warning, he picked up a basketball and threw it at me. I was only on the fourth bleacher, so I wasn't far away, and as hard as he was throwing that ball, I was liable to get hurt. The only thing that saved me was his lousy aim. He missed, four of five times, and with each miss he got madder and threw the ball even harder. I was considering jumping into the path of the ball to try to cool him off, but he finally hit me. It didn't hurt that much, but I acted like it did, and he seemed satisfied to have just hit me once.

When the bell rang, I limped to class and grimaced several times, hoping he would decide I had suffered enough. Instead, I think it encouraged him to do more. After sixth hour Terry Coe said Wolfe was still after me, but he had decided only to hit me in the stomach, not in the face. That was sort of a relief, because I hate being hit in the face. Of course I'm not too crazy about being hit in the stomach either, but with my limited choices, I'd look to the positive side of things.

And then it was 3:15. The bell rang, and Steve McCann, Steve Galvin, we called him "Muley", and I left class, went to the lockers to pick up our dirty gym clothes and books, and went to the pop machine to get a coke.

At a little after 3:30 we finished our cokes and left the building. I honestly thought I might make it home, but just as we got to the sidewalk in front of the school, Wolfe and a couple of his friends caught up with us.

"Keep walking," he said. "We're still on the school grounds." This was of concern to him because he had already been in three fights on school property that year, and he'd probably be expelled if he got in another one. He'd won all three fights too, and the guys he fought were a lot bigger than me.

I didn't say anything. I was trying to think of a way out of the situation. I knew I could outrun him, but I wanted a solution that would preserve my pride and dignity. Besides, running would only postpone my eventual fate. I continued to walk.

He took off his jacket and handed it to Muley to hold. It was one of those little, faded, blue-denim jackets that tough guys always seem to wear. When Muley took it I suspected that I wasn't going to get any help from him and Steve. I was sure of this when everyone suddenly dropped back leaving Wolfe and me alone, several yards ahead of them.

My stomach was tied in knots. It felt just like it did in second grade after I ate a half a tube of Elmer's glue on a dare.

"How come you're after me anyway, Roger? I thought we were friends." It was a lie, I knew we weren't even close to being friends, but I was desperate.

"You know why. It's because of what you called me."

"I don't remember calling you anything." I didn't want to come right out and call him a liar, even though that's what he was. I knew I hadn't

called him anything, because while smarting off to him was dangerous, calling him any names would have been suicide. And I didn't feel that much like dying.

"Well I remember what you called me, you damn no good ___ ___ __ ___. You've been asking for it all year, and now I'm going to kick your _____ ass."

"Come on, Roger. If I said anything, I was just kidding. You know that." I guess he didn't, because as I spoke, he switched his class ring from his left hand to his right, which was his main punching hand. That switch had an amazingly terrifying psychological effect. I could mentally picture great hunks of bloody flesh, my flesh, hanging from the jagged edges of his ring.

The hell with dignity, I thought, I'm going to run. Unfortunately, I could also picture myself running down the street with Wolfe on my heels, calling me names because he couldn't catch me, and everyone else laughing. Everyone laughing; that's what did it. I couldn't run. Not if I wanted to show my face at school again.

We were almost to a bridge that went over a creek where I'd gone fishing a few times. "When we get to the bridge, you'd better stop and fight," he said.

"I'm not going to fight you. I know you can beat me easy. You must outweigh me by forty pounds."

"I know I can too," he said.

We were across the bridge and I wasn't about to stop walking. I guess I figured it would be harder for him to hit a moving target. It wasn't. About twenty feet past the bridge, he told me to stop. I didn't, and he hit me under the right eye, his ring carving a groove. He also managed to hit my nose and start it bleeding with the same punch. I turned away in more of less of a daze, and he went with me. He swung another heavy right that glanced off the side of my head, and again I felt his ring draw blood. I expected him to let up, but through my good eye, I could see him advancing once again. I felt the gym bag I had been holding slide out of my hand. As he punched at my head, my fists came up and blocked the blow that might have put me out if it had connected. One thing I was sure of. There was no way I could fight him fair and come out in one piece. He wasn't an expecially good fighter; he hardly ever faked or used his left, but he had a tremendously hard punch.

He had a big grin on his face now. I guess maybe I did look kind of foolish standing there with blood all over my face and my eye barely open. He swung for my head again. I partially blocked the punch and at the same time aimed a kick for his groin. Damn it! How could I have missed. My shoe hit his thigh with no affect except to surprise him. I took advantage of his surprise and kicked him in the shin so hard he almost fell. Before he could recover, I moved in quickly and hit him three times just as hard and as fast as I could, once in the stomach and twice in the face. The blow to the stomach bent him over, setting him up perfectly for a kick to the face. I hesitated. I didn't like Wolfe a bit, and he'd started the fight, but I'd never done anything that brutal before. If I seriously injured him I'd feel pretty bad. Like hell I would! My foot swung up for his mouth.

I had waited too long. He straightened up, avoiding the kick. His face turned dark with rage, and he waded in, swinging both fists like hammers, completely overwhelming me. I don't know how long the fusilade of blows lasted. All I could do was protect myself as well as possible until it was over.

Both of my eyes were closed and I just held my arms in front of my face. Finally the punches stopped. I stood with my arms still up for about ten seconds before I realized he'd stopped. Finally, I lowered my arms and squinted through the slits of my eyes. I just managed a groan as his huge fist connected with my chin. I went down and just lay looking up at the sky. It looked like it might rain later. I heard someone talking about a mile away, asking if I was alright. That's funny. How could they be shaking me from that far away? The voice suddenly got closer, and I recognized it as Muley's. I could finally make him out and then I saw McCann too.

"Thanks for all the help, guys," I said. "I thought Coe said Wolfe wasn't going to hit me in the face." For some reason my saying that struck me as being funny, and I started laughing. Muley and Steve started laughing, too, and I managed to stop just long enough to say, "It's not funny!" before bursting into more insane laughter.

They helped me up, finally, and we walked to the Standard gas station down the street aways. The man on duty there glanced at me once and told me not to mess up the restroom when I asked him for the key. I said I wouldn't, and he reluctantly gave me the key. I cleaned the blood off my face, and when I was done, returned the key to the hook. We left and weren't even across the lot before the attendent went in to check the restroom to see if it was still clean.

When we got to their turnoff, I was left to walk the rest of the way home by myself. When I got there, I got some ice out of the freezer, put it in a washcloth, and put the cloth on my eyes for a few minutes. It didn't seem to be doing anything, so I threw the ice in the sink and went and folded my newspapers.

I became a big celebrity and had to explain to everyone what had happened to me. By the time I finished delivering my papers, my mom was home, and I had a heckuva time talking her out of calling the police. The humiliation of that would have been worse than the beating.

Later that night some of the girls I knew came over and made a fuss over me. I pretended to be in more pain that I really was and they were very sympathetic. Monday at school was more of the same.

I didn't even need the baseball bat I had sawed off and carried to and from school under my coat. I had determined not to use it except in self-defense. At first, I was all set to get revenge, but after I thought about it, I decided to forget it. However, if Wolfe was going for a repeat performance, I planned to break both of his arms at the elbow and whatever else came to bat. After a week, I got tired of carrying my club around and decided to take my chances.

* * *

I still remember on the last day of school thinking up ways to initiate next year's freshmen. I thought of some pretty good ideas, but I never carried them out. And it's probably just as well. There are men confined in Statesville for doing less.

--Doug Richard

"THE GLASS"

I squinted through the glass, a rough combination of tire-dug pot holes streching to the horizon. Almost beyond sight and certainly beyond sound a farmer tilled his field. Farmers in the delta had made a meager living off the soil for hundreds of years and today was no different. Looking down at him, bent to his task, I felt as though the entire history of the region could be written around this one old man.

Another figure appeared, the noon day sun illuminating his approach. I peered a little harder through the glass. The figure carried a farm implement of some sort, perhaps a spade. The figure approached the farmer. They were apparently discussing the days work. Although it was hard to determine from that range, the farmer seemed to be pointing out things to be done. He gestured towards a corner of the field and the figure moved off in that direction. Must be a relative I told myself. I'd never known a farmer in this area wealthy enough to have hired help.

The seemingly endless strip streched out before me like the sign on the back of a moving van. Come to think of it, those vans even have the right route number on them.

I noticed a truck crawling over the horizon, slow movement necessitated by the condition of the road. Wheel at a time it advanced. Certainly the driver would not want to break down in such a desolate area. I wondered what cargo brought him to the delta. Grain? Farm tools? I doubted the possibility. The green hulk passed beneath me laboriously, unknowing. It occured to me that being a truck driver must be hazard Almost anything could happen on such a miserable road.

A bicycle stumbled along about a half mile down the road. I couldn't determine much about the rider from that distance. A gull caught my attention. I admired its gentle, almost solem gliding in search of a noon meal. It held me in admiration, almost hypnotized by the grace of its flight. Sort of like a magician's dummy watching the pendulum action of a gold watch. But perhaps that was a fitting pathos. Birds did naturally what men spent billions not being able to do. Soaring freely above the troubles of earthly men. "Men are a lot like birds", I thought. I watched him until he was out of sight, then started down the road again.

The bicycle was much closer now, too close. I reminded myself to keep my eyes on the road. Watching birds could be fatal. The rider was an old man, perhaps in his sixties or seventies. Life lines had dug deep into his face and hands. His eyes seemed to stare uncaring down the road, this miserable line to and from nowhere. The man was very thin, very, very thin, I thought. It was likely that poor diet had helped deepen the lines in his face. Veins showed heavily from his hands. The years of toil in the field had taken their toll. But then, it was proper that they did. It wouldn't be right to look young all of your life. Not having the lines and veins to remind you of your lack of immortality. He pedaled steadily, seemingly making better time than the truck had. But trucks don't age, they get torn apart, at least in this part of the world. The old man stayed on the hard crust in the center of the road. He passed in silence. I returned to staring down the road through the glass. "Damn this lonely, humid strip of hell".

About an hour had passed. The road was the same. I had hoped it would change. Not here though, not in this rotten delta. Nothing changes here. Year after year little men work their hearts out, just to live to work their hearts out again. All for what? For this damn swamp! For this all demanding slab of silt and ooze. Very hard to believe! Yet every day they're here. Beating their heads against an earthen wall. They plant, cultivate and harvest by hand. Backs bent to the sun, feet wet by the constant moisture, seemingly oblivious to the world about them. "You're all nuts, out of your mother-loving heads" I murmured hatingly to myself. "On the other hand, what in hell am I doing here? Oh well, a job's a job".

Clouds were forming in the east. Great gray and white battle galiions sailing inland to attack the defenceless continent. Confident in their ability to fire great storms on their objective without resistance. Skirts of rain were falling below them forming their own seas for sailing as they came. Half an hour, forty-five minutes I figured. Then the already pot-marked road would become a hopeless mire of mud and vision-distorting rain.

The horizon disappeared in the onslaught of water. Visibility dropped to about seventy yards. The rain made the road a river of mud. Certainly no one would be traveling on it in such weather. I sat behind the glass, confident, at least in my safety. Peering into the downpour of water I wondered about the old man on the bicycle. Oh well, he probably paid no more attention to the rain than he did to the road. Maybe that was it. Maybe that was the secret to life in this crummy hole, I thought. "Maybe if you ignore it, the misery of the place can't bother you. No such luck for me.

I strained to see through the rain-speckled glass. I caught a glimpse of something during a let up in the rain. Could it be? The rain closed in as fast as it had parted. No, I suppose not, your eyes play tricks on your mind in heavy rain. I relaxed behind the glass again. If only it was later in the afternoon, the sun would be below the high clouds. Then I could see a little better. Then I could see if that "something" was anything at all. I hoped that it wasn't.

I'm not really sure how I got into this business. What a way to go through life. Looking through this dumb glass at road after road after road. Wondering about birds and farmers. Telling myself how necessary it is. Trying to lend some logic to it in my mind. Some damn fool said "Johnston, grab 39 and hit the road" and there I was. Imagine, a sparrow like me in a falcon's world. A world I had looked up to once. It was sort of like turning twenty-one; once you got there you didn't want it.

Shawdows appeared at the edge of the rain, first one then the other. They were walking single file down the center of the road, heads bent low against the rain, unaware of the oncoming danger. My worst fears had come to reality.

The first man was rather short and thin. His face, what I could see of it, was characteristic of his race. Rather wide at the cheeks and flat. A short but wide nose centered the close set eyes. His neck was not more than a stump connecting his head to the upright roman collar of his jacket. Dark large buttons connected the neck to the crude dull belt buckel. His trousers ended in mud at his knees, apparently from a fall in the torrential rain. His boots were boots no longer but large clumps of mud to be dragged and lifted along. The soggy figure was a pitiful sight indeed.

The man behind was a bit taller but not much. His face was also very wide but curiosly long and skeletal. His uniform jacket was torn at the shoulder with a button missing on the front. His walk was lighter than the first man. He seemed to be deliberatly pacing himself, so as not to overtake the shorter fellow.

I watched them through the glass for a while. Their slow progress left me plenty of time. There was no need for hasty action. I focused the scope and squeesed the trigger. Quickly moving to the first man now frozen with shock, I fired again. After watching through the glass for any movement, I descended from the tree and walked over to the bodies. Checking for signs of life, I found none. I checked all their pockets for papers and weapons, S.O.P. I stuffed the thin man's wallet in my jacket and dragged their bodies into the weeds, then threw in their weapons.

Taking a cloth from my jacket I wiped and capped the glass of the scope. I started walking towards headquarters hoping no one was watching me through a glass. I, chose the fields for my exit. There was just not enough cover on the road. Damn fools should have known better. By nightfall I had reached headquarters. Sargent Anselmi asked, "How'd it go". I dumped the wallet on his desk, and said, two.

--Anon.

Sarah

Sarah woke early that Sunday morning. The sounds of the T.V. blared up to her from the den beneath her bedroom. She dressed quickly in the chill, January morning. She brushed the tangles from her hair, and stumbled sleepily along the carpeted hallway. She heard the banging doors of the medicine cabinet as she passed the bathroom door, she sensed that inside Bill was preparing to shave.

Outside of the door to Mike and Billy's room, she saw that their beds were empty. Crossing the landing to the room at the end of the hall, she opened the door and saw, by his empty bed, that three year old Kurt had joined his big brothers, ages five and seven, in the den below.

Peter, age one and a half, lay sprawled on his stomach, across his bed. He was in his furry, yellow sleeper, reminding her of a soft, yellow marshmallow. In his crib, eight month old, Fritzie lay curled like a little pink and blue kitten. His short legs were curled under his plump body, rump in the air, thumb in his mouth. "It's good," she thought, "they need the extra sleep." Both had suffered from colds, and for the first time in a week, they had slept through the night.

Sarah closed the door to their room, crossed the hall to the landing, and went down the steps. When she reached the bottom she paused and called to the den, "Hey fellas, turn the T.V. down." As the sounds from the den diminished, she crossed the hall and went into the kitchen.

Measuring the coffee, by tablespoonfuls, she dreamily took in the day about her. The mid-winter sun, had already warmed the room. The sky was a clear, deep blue, streaked with black and brown slashes and patterns from the woods across the street and next door. "A day not to be wasted," she thought, "first breakfast, then feed and bathe the babies, Church, then perhaps an outing for the afternoon." With the smell of the coffee drifting around her, she hurried to prepare breakfast.

Above her, she heard her husband's footsteps then her sons' voices racing to greet him. Sausage links splattering in the skillet beside her, she split an English muffin and stuffed it into the toaster. She paused when she heard the shouts and squeals from the living-room across the hall. Shouts and squeals always accompanied a wrestling match. Breaking the last of the eggs into a small bowl in front of her, she beat them with a fork, and poured them into the bubbling butter in the bottom of the skillet.

She smiled as she listened to the sounds about her. The laughing shrieks told her that Mike was being turned head over heels. Billy's wildly happy laughter announced that he was being rolled and tickled. Kurt's soft, deep, chuckles meant that he was running around and around the others, hoping to be drawn into the pile.

During breakfast they decided, together, that after church, they would drive downstate to visit their families. Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles. It was the beginning of a very pleasant day.

Sarah hurriedly cleared the table, scraped the greasy, egg-coated, jelly-smeared plates and put them into the sink to soak. Above her she heard Peter's voice chanting, "mom, mom, mom, mom." She had his cereal and juice ready, but took a moment to put Fritzie's bottle on to warm, set out his fruit and cereal, then hurried up the stairs.

At the top of the stairs, her husband called to her from their room, "Sadie, where's Kurt's other shoe? We can't find it anywhere."

"Look on the windowsill in the livingroom. I saw it there yesterday." she said as she turned toward the babies' room. As she entered the room, Peter greeted her, arms wide, smiling, and she marveled at his smile. "Oh Peter, smiles like yours make living worth while," she said, as she took him in her arms.

"What is that smell?" Sarah turned toward the baby, wondering at the sickening sweetness. "He hasn't moved. My God, he hasn't moved." She clutched Peter to her. Then she heard the screams. Womb splitting, heart tearing screams, torn from some lost primeval animal. "Fritzie's dead, he's dead, cold, hard, dead."

When Sarah woke, it was early evening. She sat alone in the cold dirt, on top of a hill, oblivious to the sights and the sounds about her. She pulled her brown, tattered coat close around her. Her first sensation was the chill of the icy, snow-spitting wind, and she shivered. She picked a small twig from the ground on which she sat. With the twig she began to trace circles in the hard, cold earth, sighing out loud, "Sarah, my name is Sarah."

Slowly, she pulled herself to her feet and leaned against the silver frosted trunk of an old, winter-barren apple tree. "Strange," she thought, "that an apple tree should be in this place." She looked out over the valley, and her eyes followed the trace of the ribbon-like road curving beneath her, from the left, then to the right, toward the base of the neighboring hills, then gently curving back, until it dissappeared behind the forest on her left. She turned to her right, sensing the house before she actually saw it.

It is built of square stones in varying shades of gray, mortered together in a light gray. The roof is thatch. The thatch has silvered with age. On the corner of the roof nearest Sarah, the oaken beams of the rafters are exposed. The house is small. The front is barely large enough to bear the huge, oak-plank door, which stands slightly ajar. Two small windows are centered on either side of the door. Each window has six small panes of glass that glow golden in the late afternoon sun. The window on the left has one plank shutter that bangs against the stone of the house. Just beneath the front door, serving as a step, is a large dark gray stone, worn smooth and deep in its center. From this stone, a path of brown wood chips lead the eye close beside the tree, where Sarah stands, and about twenty feet beyond, to the gate in the gray stone wall. The wall runs parallel to the road to the left of the tree.

Just opposite the gate, in the dust of the road, Sarah sees a black carriage. Hitched to it is a small black horse. The horse is impatient to move. It paws at the dirt of the road. First it tugs at the carriage and then at the reins which tie it to the gate in the stone wall.

The wind has gone now. Snow falls in great, soft flakes. Sarah turns toward the house, then slowly walks to it. For a moment she pauses at the great stone step; then with no more hesitation, she steps forward, and disappears into the darkness.

--Pat Bohler

Shade Tolerant

She stood beneath the oaks and closed her eyes. The wind scraped branch against branch, and the leather-green of the leaves wavered the rays of the sun.

It seemed quiet. Rhodesia realized that she had never heard absolute silence even once in her life.

The blue jays began a ruckus in the oaks, and she opened her eyes, looking around for her dog. "Will," she yelled. And then she whistled for him, turning to search the shadows.

"Now come on, damn it, Will," she called, "get back here now!"

"For a female," said a voice to her left, "you sure have a heck of a vocabulary."

She turned, expecting to see no one, for lately, bodiless voices had been descending upon her from vague remembrances of morning dreams. Half-awake, half-asleep, she heard the dialogue of the shy, disquieted wind shadows. They never spoke in whispers but rather in full, manly voices, sometimes only saying, "Listen." And she would listen the rest of the day, until nightfall came and she would realize she had heard nothing.

She turned and faced the man at her left. Then she shrugged slightly, lifting her hands and trying to think of something to say. "My, uh, dog just took off," she said to the man.

"And your dog's name is Will... is that short for anything?" He looked around, trying to locate the animal.

"No," she said.

"I just asked because I wondered," he said.

"Oh, that's alright...," she lied, "alot of people ask that."

She walked forward, hoping the man would notice her intent search for her dog and leave. He stood, looking lost in a hopeless attempt to be helpful, and she felt a regretful twinge of conscience.

"Well...," she turned and motioned with her right hand, "thanks for the help," and then she walked on, through the oaks. She didn't turn back to see his reaction. She wanted to find Will. "That man probably stands around and looks lost, alot", she thought. And she whistled for Will.

The wind flew through the trees and brought with it a smell of rain. She began to run, and from the pit of her stomach there moved upward a shudder of fear, for Will was prone to flights of freedom from the end of his chain, which encompassed a two, sometimes a three or a four day span. And she was afraid of the thought of his never returning, so she fought it back with anger.

"Damn it," she said to herself.

"Will," she shouted. She whistled. The wind pulled at the sleeves of her sweater and it made her look down at her arms. On the left sleeve was a wisp of white fur, and she lifted it with her hand. It was a small clump of Will's fur; he was prone to shedding. She held the fur in her fingertips and placed it, and her hand, in the pocket of the sweater. It was at times like this that she realized what was real and unreal in the world. And the wind played at her heels, in the dust, as she walked regretfully away.

--Etha Griffin

Jaws of the Sky

In that moment of thunder, Morgan remembered: the smoke-shaded fog eroding the frantic morning to a timeless tranquility, the dampness of the early day, its smothering serenity forging vast walls of wetness between the trees, and all the people slowly climbing the steps of the church, opening and closing the oak doors to allow for their entrance.

He stood at a distance, employing the fog to conceal him from those he scrutenized, and made no attempt to check his contempt. The initial noises of the church organ fled the sanctuary and sought the tree tops. And Morgan had mumbled quietly, "hypocrites," for inside the church was his brother, Lancaster, an unbreathing, unblinking, unattainable victim of the congregations bombastic sympathy. They had thought nothing of him when he was alive.

And Morgan remembered his own disbelief when they told him of his brother's death. And the scream which came from Lancaster's widow when they told her. The scream came like the roaring hush of an approaching train. It wound itself tautly around the throat of every person in ear-shot and slowly began to choke each one. Its voiceless timbre tensed them all with apprehension. Tear.

The scream proclaimed yet another disaster. It celebrated this death calmly, yet it threatened their own souls with its insatiable sadness and hopelessness. Someone had slapped the girl to silence her; it had not been Morgan.

They had all stood in one room, with a table in their midst. It had been a round table, and wooden. Only a few of the men's hats lay on the table top. And Rhodesia, the widow, the girl that had screamed, held her left hand clasped in her right, paled as the scar-colored horse that had

brought her to this place. She, too, stood, suddenly disliked, misunderstood, and alone. Amazingly blameless in the face of Lancaster's death, she was nevertheless despised for it.

The room, and the house belonged to Hosea Bushfield. Morgan had shook the man's hand when they were introduced and as he had looked into Bushfield's apologetic eyes and the straight, unsmiling line of his mouth, he realized, amazed at his own mournful powers of concentration, that he liked the man.

They had both stood there, side by side, near the table, gazing at the girl that had just screamed. Bushfield's eyes had moistened slightly at the scene. Morgan had moved his eyes downward, to the floor before him, and studied the worn carpet stringently, waiting, as they were all waiting, for the panic to return to the girl's eyes. He had wanted to be, at that moment, far from the place of his brother's death, on a path through the forest, or anywhere but in Bushfield's parlor. Doing anything but staring at the thread bare carpet beneath his feet, waiting for a girl to scream.

So they, Lancaster's father, mother brother and Bushfield, had made plans for the funeral. Rhodesia sat mutely in another part of the house. And Lancaster's dog, a mud-colored mutt with brimming brown eyes, paced constantly outside, occasionally hanging his head to lap from a tin bowl of stale water that had last been filled by the man now dead.

With the thunder came the lightning, looking false and insignificant in the daylight, and Morgan began to leave. He walked away from the church and the people inside the church and the place of his brother's death, and made his way to Bushfield's house for the last time. And he held the head of Lancaster's dog in his hands and filled the tin bowl with water before he left.

--Etha Griffin

Safari Summer

Swimming on the quiet side of the spillway of the Big Muddy River -
Dung-colored slime oozed between our toes
if they touched bottom.
We rubbed our entire bodies with this slime.
Repulsive, you say
Maybe -
But we were immortal.
Imaginary pirate caves of shale and sandstone on Big Muddy's banks -
Were big enough for two.
Just holes, you say
Maybe -
Today.
Collecting sandstone slabs for sculpting on the concrete apron of
Grandpa's well.
da Vincis we -
Our Pietas were all lop-sided hearts.
Afraid of how cold and deep that well was -
Drink deep of yesterday's water
Maybe -
It will never be so sweet again.
Skin-the-cat on the eaves trough that led to the cistern -
Great fun till the trough collapsed.
Was that what made Grandpa mad?
Maybe -
The dart you hurled into the head of his best laying hen -
That was the best chicken and dumplings
Since -
Salt shakers ready in pockets of torn and faded jeans -
Eating sun-warmed tomatoes from anybody's garden
Juice running down scabby arms stung like
Well -
Like hell.
Baseball played our special way in Max Sample's pasture -
Cowpies for bases.
Nobody slid.
When Toby made third base TOO good -
We yelled -
"Twenty years of cowboy and I never stepped in shit!"
That old blue racer tested his speed against ours.
Escape up the apple tree -
That snake took a three-hour sunbath.
So did we -
Up the tree.
You died your seventeenth summer.
So did my youth.
Maybe -
I cry for both.

--Sharon Marizza

THE PALACE

There was a place where I always fled to
throughout my boyhood
whenever I was bored
confused
lonely

I called it my Private Palace
though all it was
was the huge tunnel
under the busy bridge
made of gray concrete
built only to transport the Buicks and the Fords over my stream
as I called it
Not too many people knew of my Private Palace
for it was well hidden from the outside world
I still remember the day after my ninth birthday
the day I discovered my Pharaoh's Tomb

Over a decade had passed from that day
and one cold, winter afternoon
feeling that my life was as barren
and as frozen still
as the stream which lay before me

I HAD RETURNED
memories
memories
memories

Yes, this was the place...

it was here where I fought off twenty fierce red-bearded vikings

it was here where I hid from the seven-foot tall natives
they would never find me here
for no one knew this part of the jungle as well as I

it was here where Mr. Spock, McCoy and I had just beamed down
to answer an unknown, alien distress signal

it was here where I buried my treasures
where I watered my horses
where I mined for gold and found some
where I used three pieces of yellow chalk
writing her name with mine all over the damp, gray walls
my secret would be safe....here

it was here where I now stood
feeling much better than
ten minutes before
My palace, my Private Palace

With a deep feeling of regret
I began
to return
up the path
out to reality
the path I had travelled so many times before

WHEN

I heard a rock break the ice
downstream
and ricochet
off my palace
walls

THE PALACE (continued)

Quickly, but quietly
retracing my steps
I saw a young boy
about nine
all alone
bravely crossing the frozen stream
my frozen stream
His Alaskan Yukon
No, I was wrong
His newly-discovered martian canals
for
I heard him speak softly into his clinched hand
requesting Mr. Spock
to beam down
the rest
of the crew members
of the inter-galactic landing party...

--Bill Pavlich

Thoughts for a Newborn

As I listen to your first vigorous cry
I think of what you will be
Will you be a famous doctor
perhaps the one who cures cancer
or
just the common cold
Will you be the one to clean up our raped political system
or another "Tricky Dicky"
Will you, my newborn, end up a wino on skid row
or
a down-trodden girl on 42nd Street looking for a fast buck
Will you remember me on Mother's Day and
all the days after
Will you give me grandchildren or
an explanation as to why not
Will you love and care for your spouse
just as I care for you
But you are an INDIVIDUAL
and I cannot and will not force anything
on you
my child
You must think and reason for
and with
yourself
I will always be here for guidance
when you feel yourself slipping
Yes, dear child of mine,
you will endure just as I and
generations before me have
You will learn to live with joy and misery
or die hopelessly alone
They're taking you to the nursery now
but please remember
these thoughts
although you're too young to understand
And always know within your heart that I love you
have prayed nine months for you
and would have died for you

--Pam Heavens

because hate is legislated

because hate is legislated.....written into the primer
and into the testament
show into our blood and brains
like vaccine and vitamins
because our days are of time.....of hours
and the clock hands turn
closing like a circle around us
and black timeless night sucks us in like quicksand
receiving us totally
without a parachute or a raincheck
a key to heaven or a long last look
I need love now
I need your love
because slow negative death withers the world
and only your love can turn the tide

you rise out of sleep
like a growing thing rises from the garden soil
two seed leaves part to be your mouth
how beautifully you turn
mouth tilting to let my kisses in,
cushioning the inherant murder that is in me
lie still
we shall be longer.....
we need so little room now
we two
thus on a single pillow
we move nearer
nearer to heaven
until i burst inside you
like a screaming rocket.....
then quickly apart
the return trip to earth.....
and your eyes never even opened after the last kiss
we have loved hard

the wonderful strength of your thighs
is back to gentle beauty now
your nipples contract
together like blossoms
for the night
your hand
half sleeping
finds me.....
your touch is very dear

many an idle dream
is looking for a home of sleep
equal to yours
.....in which to happen

--Melvyn A. Felton

December Slipped Out

December slipped out quietly, turning Gregory's page again
Creating only repetition because now

The cold has come
Not the cold of beer
or the cold of DRISTAN TABLETS
or the cold of Long Dead Love
or the cold of quarters dimes and dollars

The Cold has come
More the cold of long spawned glaciers
or of tomorrow's T.V. dinner
or of skater's scratching blades
or stiffened penguin feathers

The Cold has come

and

December slipped out quietly, turning Gregory's page again

--Craig Tuntland

SONNET TO A SEASON

Time was, when I never really minded spring -
Although, too much, breathed too deeply
Could make of one an imbecile, a thing.
But now your gone, and spring takes too much care.
Time was, when you brought me spring's first jonquil -
Proving that love is glorious yellow.
And now, shuttered tight, I watch for you, still.
Time was, when touching the first uncurled green leaf
Reminded me of you, and your warm hands
Unraveling soft hidden parts of me.
Of course, its easy and prudent to say
Now that I've lived spring with you (and the other way)
Spring can come or go, life goes on, I don't care -
(Don't believe me - spring is too hard to bear.)

--Joan M. Koren

It Took Me Forty Years

It took me forty years, more or less
to realize
I don't control the world. (how odd, I don't? Who does?)

It's simple mathematics
Add up wisdom = wise
FLASH! the answer past my eyes.

The only world I really knew
(and not too intimately)
Was all along
Just me.

--Joan M. Koren

Careless Of Me

Careless of me to trip and stumble over the lies you've left
scattered
around my life. Piled against my door like dead, decayed leaves.
Already exhausted by the sheer enormity of the task before me
muddling
through stacks of deceits in order to reach tomorrow, no wonder
I procrastinate.
Ah, your sweet lies. "tomorrow will be better..."
Ah, your fragile lies, tossed in crumbly leaf-heaps of dull, cried up
days and barren nights.
Constantly cluttering up the doorstep of my mind and beating against
the windows of my brain.
Clumsy accumulation of promises meant solemnly, solicitously
to placate me.
"Tomorrow will be better." Even your gaudiest lie remains unoriginal
and indistinguishable in the collective junk-pile of our togetherness.
Stupid of me to agree (knowing all the while, this was the slyest
lie yet) No matter.

But tomorrow being better (isn't spring due to drop in?)
I just might (if you don't mind)
Vigorously,
sweep the rank debris of constant unmet needs and pale apathy from
my walk. From my mind. Throwing away bits and pieces of stale love
and half-finished dreams. Disappearing once and for all in a gust
of wind ressurected from beyond the day after next.
Industriously,
I just might (if you don't mind) bundle what you laughingly call
TRUTH into tightly sealed packages tied with heavy-duty twine and
leave them for the trash man. (He knows what to do with your truth)
Rigorously,
I just might (if you don't mind) wash away the faded, jaded mementos
left behind by your drab indifference.
No matter.
How remiss of me to imagine for the merest, fleetingest
second,
being rid of you and your lies, all in ONE day. No ordinary
conglomeration, this. Just a life-time.
Ah, well. Perhaps some day, some spring.
One day, one life is too short to undo
to put away
to tidy
the lies left behind.
But, maybe tomorrow. Tomorrow might be better.
No. matter.

--Joan Koren

Starlight Worlds

You play with brightly painted yo-yo's
wrapping them around my heart.
Your clown-like smile wipes off like magic
while starlight worlds all fall apart.

Candy-coated chocolate fairy tales
are often told by you to me,
It's hard to balance on the tightrope
when you're near I cannot see.

-- Linda Bohm

Seemingly For No Reason...

Behind her red lipped, china painted smile
lie
secrets of unfathomable importance.
She hides them within herself
seemingly for no reason
but insanity.

Within the depths of her long lost heart
sleep
only untouched dreams of love.
She quenches every flame
seemingly for no reason
but insanity.

Her hands, in lacework of utter fantasy
play
melodies straight from her soul.
The keys, her only companion
seemingly for no reason
but insanity.

The morning rays of the flittering sun
die
from her seal of black velvet.
She draws them tightly together
seemingly for no reason
but insanity.

The very breath that trembles through her nostrils
stops
for lack of desire to continue.
She died today
seemingly for no reason
but insanity.

-- Linda Bohm

the right to be sorry

how am I doing in your eyes today?
am I just perfect enough
or is my charade
yet to be finished.
For your acceptance,
I must keep my record
flawless and of shining gold.
it won't be for long.
my record has been unnoticeably marred.

Tell me,
what is it that you'd do
if you suddenly discovered
that I was a human
that made mistakes?
would you deny me
the right to be sorry?

--Linda Bohm

The Stillborn Entity

deep within callous casings of clearest ice
my arms ache with longing
to reach you

my lips form words -
noiseless utterances.

my desperate struggling
is quieted in webs of
imaginary reality.
my cries for recognition
are silenced in this ominous tomb -
inside, the stillborn entity
yearns
for substantial stability.
my mind rages in rapids
of ceaseless activity -
surrounded by a perverse coverlet of confusion.

I am left to capitulate
to this threatening state of uncertainty -
left only to wait
for a better means of existence,
left only to wonder
if a better existence is, indeed,
a possibility.

-- Linda Bohm

an ode to oozing life

She died bleeding
like a blazing red sunset
brilliant in the winter sky
reflected on the alabaster snow;
then quiet, fading into purples and pinks;
conceding into grays and blues,
ending in the blackness
of the night
Asking, pale against the deepening
pool of blood
why the sun must set
in the early morning rising
of her life.

--Karola

Time is Tight

"Where have you been? You could have called."
"At Perry's, drinking toasts."
"I have been climbing up the walls.
I thought you had a stroke."

"What were you doing, drinking scotch?
It's clear you have no shame.
Don't fault old age for failing health.
You have yourself to blame."

"What is your weight today, my dear?"
"Two hundred twenty-three."
"You never diet like you should.
Enough potatoes, please!"

"Could we afford a trip to France?
I've heard it's lovely, pet.
Your cough's becoming deeper, hon;
Put out that cigarette!"

"The Franklin's marriage turned for worse
I swear I don't know how.
If I were pitied Mary Anne,
No pardon I'd allow."

"It's three o'clock. Now come to bed;
You have no sense of time.
I wish you'd study my desires,
The way you sip your wine."

"What knowledge thrills your heart tonight?"
"Oh, nothing need be said,
A secret nature holds in store,
For tucking us in bed."

"The universe exploded once,
Ten billion years ago,
Began collapsing, warping space,
Five billion years ago."

"And very sure I calculate,
The holes we see in space,
Approach us never passing by,
The speed of light they pace."

"Without escape or slowing down,
The end of time draws near,
With give or take three-tenths percent,
In thirty million years."

"Oh, thank the stars we still have time,
My world is full of fret.
I have enough to worry 'bout,
Without a threat like that!"

The night was quiet, dark and still;
Homes shook, and time was spent,
As nature came and nature took
Three-tenths of one percent.

--F. E. Fiene

Ballad of a Poor Boy

He sits and dreams of better days
when peace will soothe his soul
His mind in nervous chaos knows
first time will take its toll.

Poor boy - the world disturbs your dreams
No one will ever know
How close to sanity you've come -
How far you've yet to go

Such intellect! his teachers say,
to waste would not be fair
He skipped two grades and still excelled
but never seemed to care

His parents boast of his success
and always push him on
but never notice his despair
or ask him what is wrong

Poor Boy - the world disturbs your dreams
No one will ever know
How far removed from this old world
Are the thoughts you sew

His silence grows with every day
his fears o'er whelm his mind,
His cries for help unheeded go
No outlet can he find.

Poor boy - the world disturbs your dreams
No one will ever know
How you cried out in your mind
Against the secret foes

His brain just snapped, his teachers say
Exploded by its fears
Now he just sits locked in his dreams
His soul sheds no more tears

Poor boy - the world disturbed your dreams
No one will ever know
How close to sanity you've come
How far you've yet to go

-- L. Vaughn

Memories

My children come in screaming, "Mommy, Mommy, what do we got to eat?"
and as I wipe my hands on the blue calico apron
I remember when I was a child asking the same
I feed them
they're happy
and I sit for a while and dream
Twisting the gold band on my dishwashing hand
I think of the time when I was young
and pretty
and free
My orchid wrist corsage accenting my strapless mint green dress
of course, I had shoes to match . . . .
. . The Senior Prom so long ago . . .
But wait -- my children
are only nine and five;
again time must have slipped my mind
Pajama parties and root beer floats at the drugstore . . Ah!
and they say that memories can only come from
summers of '42!
The commencement dance -- mirrored ceiling lights
reflecting rock candy-like diamond rings
newly received and proudly worn
I met George on that "night of nights"
as Miss Grimsberry called it --
perhaps she still does
A proposal and wedding plans, a honeymoon
in Miami Beach . . . and a baby boy
the very next year
The children have gone out to play now
but I am still 17
at the prom
and foolishly in love --
with no fish to fry for an evening meal.

-- Pam Heavens

Treasures

My friend is a misty warm rainbow
Showering joy around me in prisms of light
Compassing me about on a cloud-satin pillow,
I study his hues of mystery and might.
I celebrate his royal blue loyally
Next to the gentleness of red emotion
As shades brighten to crayon-colors gradually,
And excite the orange-frisbee throwing tension
On lemon-yellow, sand-soft beaches,
As his multi-colored magnificence measures
Across azure-sea skies and ivory-cloud reaches
Ending in leprechaun golden treasures.
Yet still more is my rainbow friend to me
Than all nature's gifts of earthly reality.

-- Joyce Semplinoki

STARLET OF TOMORROW

Post adolescent lover
Painted like mirror-images
Of beauty queen
magazines.
In your dreams
you want to be real,
It's too late
to wipe away
your plastic face.
Prom scene - Beauty queen
smile
Flash!
You are blinded by the light
of compliments
and company,
Go back to your vanity
and cry away
your lonely heart,
But be sure
not to smear the make-up
That has preserved you for so long.

-- Bonnie Sayko

Cycles of Love
(impressions from photoessay
by Jack Dykings)

Delivery grimace -
expressions of uncontrolled joy.
One person becomes two -
other love cycles begin.

Skinned-knee tears -
comforted by supple silences.
Security in -
cotton-candy bosoms and arms.

Small boy trust -
nestles in callous trees,
Majestic-oak guidance -
little feet on kindworn paths.

Adolescent kindles love -
in new dimensions.
Graffiti commitments -
concrete overpass vows -
FRED AND JANET 4 EVER!

Clasped hands at altar -
recycles love.
Altar becomes graveside -
parting place.

For some (maybe most) -
there comes a time -
When love must endure -
in memories.

-- Sharon Marizza

TWO ROOMS

I have two rooms in my heart:
One is for the beautiful people like you;
One is for the ugly people like you.
Sometimes my rooms are pretty full,
Sometimes my rooms are pretty empty.
Sometimes my rooms are overcrowded from all the people I let in,
Sometimes I lock the doors to my rooms to keep everybody out.
But eventually I let everybody see both rooms,
Because everybody is ugly.
And everybody is beautiful.

-- Steve Johnson

I'D LIKE TO BE A COWBOY

I'd like to be a cowboy
But I'm not the cowboy type;
Who ever heard of a cowboy falling off his horse?

I'd like to be an athlete
But I'm not the athletic type'
Who ever heard of an athlete fumbling the ball in the endzone?

I'd like to be a musician
But I'm not the musical type;
Who ever heard of a musician who can't even tune his guitar?

I'd like to be in love
But I'm not the lovable type;
Unless you really get to know me.....

-- Steve Johnson

WHO AM I?

Who am I?
Just another person who will never know
Just another who feels his emptiness grow
Just another who never lets it show
Just like everyone else, my friend,
Just like the rest of the world.

Who am I?
Just another slob who dumps his garbage everywhere
Just another person who's too busy to care
Just another person who's too stingy to share
Lonely
Just like everyone else, my friend,
Just like the rest of the world.

-- Steve Johnson

Ginsberg

Your bearded intellect and hornrimmed spectacles perched atop
Your deviated posture juxtaposes a beat philosophy shaking
Your finger at the bovine world while
Your unholy behavior more weird than real -
Your katydid karma and phallic worship with
Jangling symbols and bisexual notions in all
Your dirty attics both here and in Paris
Issue absurdity to my two-car eyes and
Soap opera morality. So why should
Your declaration that you write for
Your own soul's ear touch me?
But it does!

--Sharon Marizza

I Looked At You

I looked at you, I thought "This may be right,"
your rumpled hair, your face, your eyes so blue.
I could not let this be "ships in the night."
I had to find a way to speak to you.

At last I found the will to say "Hello."
You smiled at me, a smile that touched my heart.
Your voice was deep and warm, I felt a glow,
and told myself that we could never part.

Our friendship, like a garden, grew and bloomed.
We laughed, we danced, we sang, we knew such fun,
but sadly, neither knew that it was doomed;
it soon would end, our brief time in the sun.

Our love was never meant to be, it seems.
We parted, friends, and shattered all my dreams.

-- Pam Heavens

But What About Motherhood?

But what about Motherhood? And Me?
You've conveniently packed me away in a box filled with yesterdays
doll clothes, memories and doo-dads and slid me under your bed
out of sight.
Slid me neatly out of your life.
Of course,
its your being so grown up and all. This clutter (including me)
just doesn't fit into your plans.
I understand.

Once around yesterday, I stood where you stand now. Turning the
corner into LIFE
And
god (even then being the same old fogy) I remember leaving him
behind, munching on a slice of apple pie. I bought that same dream
your dreaming. Paying
in newly-minted innocence and washed up hope. Learning buyer beware!
A little too late.
Hard
snow-balled memories packed tight over winters long
gone
flung away, far from your sight. And then, you too,
go
denouncing as childish the world you've known.
So
Go.

Take your friends, the ones I've never met
And your neat collection of things (who is elton john)
Wrapped tight against my ever knowing.
Thinking all along you've left me
under your bed, out of sight.
I understand.

But,
if someone (doubtful) comes looking for your mother, for me
explain will you please with your new-found mature ability
"mothers not here, not recently; besides, the fact <u>is</u> that mother
doesn't understand me. So I've slid her under the bed
in a box marked 'stupidity'
I understand. I just don't fit into et cetera...

Stop. Look. Listen. Crossing into LIFE can be hazardous.
Tomorrow
something once again will matter. Who can say what? Nagging
your thoughts like the worn out old doo-dads long packed away.
And you'll be back once more, some year, whatever spring.
Opening the box. Remembering me. (The jokes on you)

Encircling you for all your life - two gifts from me
tissue-papered in the box, secretly.
Resilient routs and golden wings.
I understand.

-- Anon.

" The Hickory Nut Colored Rabbit "
or
" Tracks to a Trap "

Ulysses, ancient lagomorph,
his rabbit youth he fled
from burrow safe and slept
Atop a mountain, rock for bed.

From death and thirst, he walked away,
and dread disease and ticks,
and frost and freeze and they who scoff,
at snares and booby traps.

He sought the high winds, running, far
from fur and feathers, see?
Tomorrow, blessed day, of hope,
He'd find his soul set free.

But there amid the tree top heights,
his foot, a tread of fear,
became entrapped in teeth of steel,
and thus, began to tear.

Unknowingly, with disbelief
he faced the fears he'd left.
They came to circle round his paw,
from them he found no rest.

BATTLE LOST FROM THE BEGINNING,
ULYSSES KNEW THE STORM.
THE CHILL OF RECOLLECTION FIERCE,
HE DID HIS BEST TO WARN.

A rabbit's voice is silence, and
Ulysses, like the rest,
fell prey to sounds, though not his own,
that sung his hopelessness.

Escape, he thought, was not at all,
and never had it been
His death had traveled with him, up
the mountainside, his sin.

Alone he watches the dropping sun,
(his last), with eyes aware
Triumphant solitude
was his, and now, into death's lair.

Ulysses' body, warm with death,
lay there for birds to feed
assemblages of carnivores
found answer to their need.

A rabbit soul, unswept by wind,
fueled the fossil skys,
But lay the trap, immortrolized,
in this, its rusted guise.

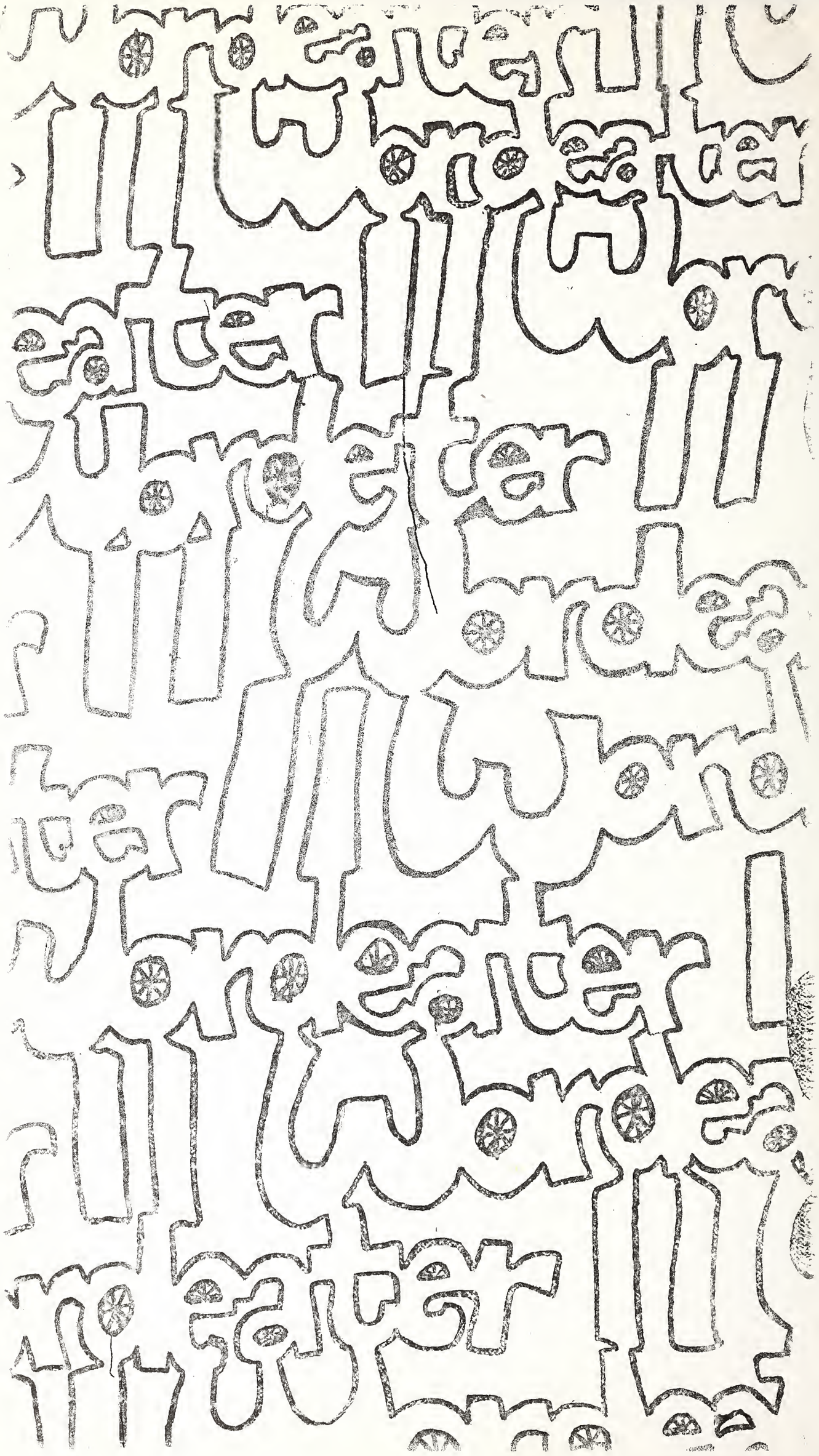
BATTLE LOST FROM THE BEGINNING;
ULYSSES KNEW THE STORM.
THE CHILL OF RECOLLECTION FIERCE,
HE DID HIS BEST TO WARN.

-- Etha Griffin

LEVEL SEVEN DESIGN COSMIC BOB

Like Spectrum Designation
Lingual Saturation Dose,
Limit Sought Defining
LEVEL SEVEN DESIGN
Latticial Spatial Distortion
Lucifer's Staff Dreams
Leering Scream Demons
Lowering, Spiraling, Dizzy
Loop Soft Disaster
Lump Sum Diseases
Light/Sound/Danger
Leapyear Soon Daughter
Lithely, She Dines
Looking Stranded, Dismal
Laundry Soap Drama
Lime Sweet Dessert
Lick Spoon Dry
Light/Sound/Danger
Life Still Dull
Late Spring Dawn
Light Snow Drifting
Lost Sleep Demanding
Leftover Sort Desperations
Loftier Sane Delusions
Light/Sound/Danger
Logical Stack Dit
Line Series Depth
Log Strain Data
Lock Strata Drain
Lost Script Dismay
Life System Decay
Light/Sound/Danger
Lesbian Sister Depraved
Libertine Stuckup Dame
Library Stack Duster
Lip Stick Drawl
Lebanese Sex Drugs
Lamp Shade Drawn
Light/Sound/Danger
Love Sick Doctor
Long Steep Decline
Lone Some Days
Lateral Sun Downs
Lee Side Debates
and Dalmation Sally's Late
Level Seven Design

SUPERSONIC SPLASHDOWN OUT OF THIS WORLD TRIP

ooooh cosmic rays and junkie dust
patter though the lighthouse, man
i just can't see where that super-
sonic out of sight noise is comin'
from someone turn down that stereo
my head is poundin' like a Banshee
drum mama get me outa this place
and now ohhhh take off i am outa
this world and no one no no one
is gonna stop me and i am riding
high on this bird and i am not
gonna drop no sir i am in a
spiral and i have wings
and i can fly just
like that bird yes
feel the wind oh
no and now what
here i come
watch out
i am so
down.
oh.

-- C. McCabe